

ANNUAL REPORT



2023-2024

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Claire, Jo and Fahmi update us on the challenges they have faced this year. This includes the groups and Health Navigators.

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How many meetings? Number of Groups we delivered. How many one-to-one clients and appointments.

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The money we spent and where did we get our income from.

06. People

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CHAIRS REPORT – JO NICOLLS

I would like to start this report by saying how proud I am to return as chair of Deaflink. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Maureen McGarrity for her work as chair of Deaflink over the last four years. She was a real benefit to Deaflink, and we were sad to see her leave. We wish her all the very best.

Deaflink is now into its 23rd year of existence and in each of those years it has developed and grown and, in some cases, changed in direction. In May, this year we moved to new offices, and we are grateful to CNTW for ensuring we did not become homeless.

One thing that is consistent is the need to support British Sign Language users to provide opportunities for them to meet and engage using their own language. The need to provide support to people who have acquired hearing loss is also often overlooked. For many who are hard of hearing the ability to communicate with others in similar situations and share experiences and tips is invaluable.



We have also been more involved in working with our Deaf and hard of hearing clients to be able to access healthcare in a suitable and accessible manner. The need for our Health Navigator programme has been highlighted in the statistics and the client feedback where many feel they would have no one else to help them. We have also seen a massive increase in supporting people with acquired hearing loss to receive support in understanding and managing their hearing aids. Technology works in mysterious ways or in some cases it does not!

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Deaflink team. Thank you everyone.



LAST YEAR

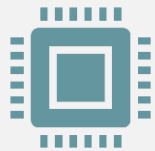
- **56 GROUPS, 455 ATTENDED**
- **230 CLIENTS, 2849 CONTACTS**



We met with 117 clients who had 313 one to one queries. 58 people we supported were referred from Audiology and this equated to 174 meetings



Most were about connecting hearing aids and mobile phones. Audiology is now mainly using Oticon now which has a slightly different system and is sometimes not compatible with android phones. In most cases we were able to solve the issue with just a few people needing to go back to audiology for help with their settings.



Other support has been around accessibility – where there was no viable option to using the phone e.g. Micro chipping pets, explaining the impact of hearing loss on an individual's life for PIP forms etc.

HARD OF HEARING WORK

Louise McGlen

HARD OF HEARING WORK

Groups

Speakers and visits included National Energy Action, Northern Stage, a follow up from last year to see works on paper at the Hatton Gallery, Audiology and Victoria Tunnel and one of our Hearing Loss Support Group members lead a session talking about his experiences of losing his hearing.

“So good to meet you and others today as it's been so long since I've been in an environment where I felt taking part and communicating was possible.”



We always have a palantypist providing live speech to text subtitles on a screen at meetings. This helps people for whom amplification via the Roger Pen does not help them hear the speaker.

D/DEAF AWARENESS EVENTS 2023

We went to North Tyneside, Cramlington, Freeman and RVI hospitals for D/deaf awareness week.

We set up a stall about our work, providing leaflets, fingerspelling cards etc.

It was a successful week with outpatients, students, nurses and staff visiting us for information and enquiries.



REGULAR BSL EVENTS



WALKING GROUP

Once a month, we organise a walking group we visit various places depending on the weather. If it rains, we go to indoor museums. A few of the places we visited include Tynemouth beach, Segedunum roman fort, Heaton park, crazy mini golf, Washington old hall, ten pin bowling, and Laing arts gallery.



DROP IN CHAT GROUP

Deaflink organise a drop-in chat group once a month at Shearer's bar. We can relax, chat with friends, play games like Jenga, uno cards, and quizzes. We also have presentations on subjects such as energy and fuel advice, providing information about the costs of living, smart meters, and priority services.



DEAF FORUMS

Deaf forums run four times a year at Brunswick Methodist church on Saturday mornings for 2 hours. We cover a variety of topics including talks on pension advice, North East Ambulance Service, Sign Health mental health & wellbeing and domestic abuse with many regular attendances.

DROP-IN SERVICE – NEWCASTLE DEAF CENTRE

OUR STAFF JO AND FAHMI ATTEND THE NEWCASTLE DEAF CENTRE TWICE A MONTH TO PROVIDE A DROP-IN SERVICE FOR DEAF BSL USERS.

IT IS FOR PEOPLE WHO NEED ADVICE ON HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS, BENEFITS, LETTER TRANSLATIONS, AND MORE. THE SERVICE IS EXTREMELY POPULAR WITH NUMEROUS BSL USERS REQUIRING SUPPORT.

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OTHER BSL EVENTS



NUFC

We visited the Newcastle United stadium tour on 10th October 2024. Sixteen BSL users enjoyed themselves and were interested in NUFC, learning things they did not previously know. They were passionate and enthusiastic, asking lots of questions.



NORTHERN LIGHTS

On Monday, 4th of December 2023, a group of ten people showed great bravery by attending the Northern Lights show at Leazes park in Newcastle. We had exceptionally terrible weather, which included heavy rain. Despite the challenging conditions, everyone enjoyed seeing the various lights and topped off the experience with warm drinks and pizza at the end of the walk.



NORTHERN STAGE

9 people attended a signed performance of 'Cinderella' at Northern Stage. It was a fantastic show with a new spin on the traditional story. This was an integrated performance with the BSL interpreter following the actors around the stage translating next to the actors on the stage instead of standing in the corner making it difficult to watch both the performance and the interpreter. This was a unique experience for us. We loved it so much from start to end.



WILDLIFE SESSIONS

We had four sessions to learn about wildlife and nature. We made birdfeeders, bird boxes, solitary bee habitats, and planted pollinator-friendly seeds with Northumberland Wildlife Trust. On 22nd march 2024, we went for a day out to Northumberlandia to participate in wild bird watching. Everyone was provided with binoculars to observe the wild birds in the forest. We learned the names of different wild birds and information about the forest, including the variety of plants and trees.

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DEAF RIGHTS

We continue to provide one to one support to BSL users who cannot access other services. We helped 113 BSL users with over 2,500 contacts (on average 23 times per person). This includes Health Navigators clients.

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Do you need help?



HEALTH NAVIGATORS

Claire Hoggeth

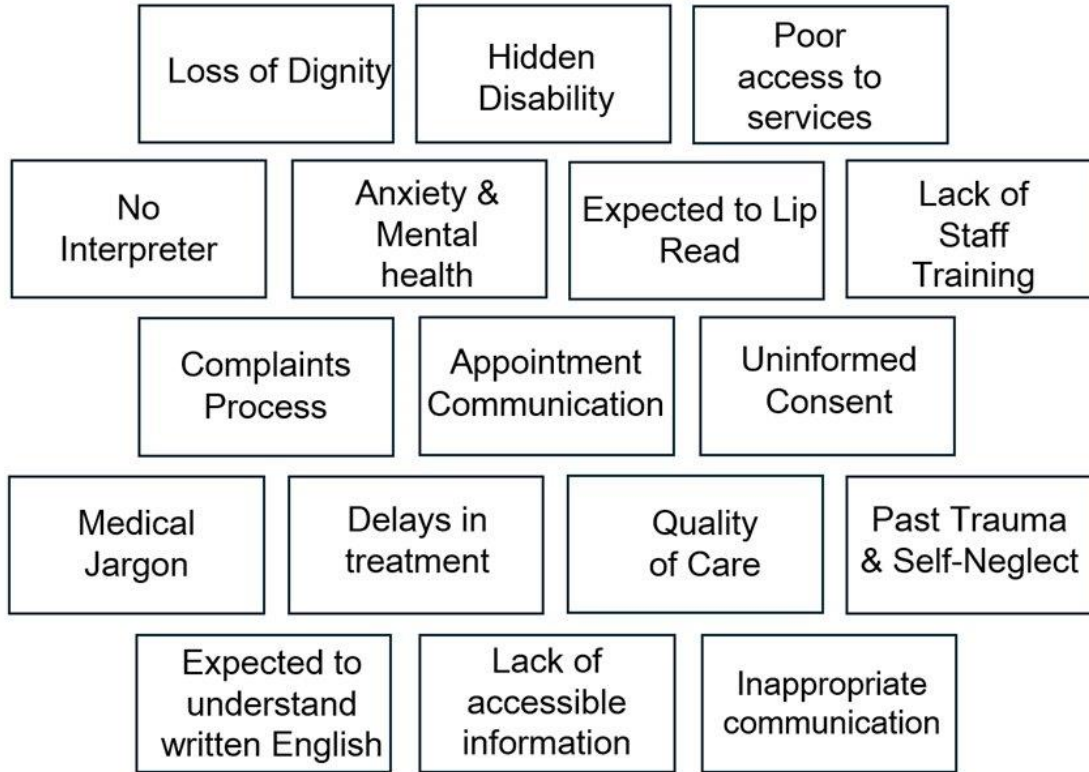
Since the last annual report, there have been changes and challenges in relation to moving to a different office, and in the way we work with our Deaf clients.

As a result of our work Deaf people are becoming more aware and are recognising their health symptoms. We had 47 clients in this year.

We are finding that they are coming to our service with serious health conditions that they have previously not recognised due to the lack of information.

We work to empower and promote understanding of health conditions and to get the appropriate support.

How BSL Users are Failed



Health Navigators are the Bridge between Patients and Staff

WHAT HEALTH NAVIGATORS DID	How many times
Advice and Information	329
Aftercare e.g. Wheelchair, social care	42
Arrange emergency interpreter	15
Arrange patient transport	19
Contact GP/Dentists/Opticians/pharmacy	115
Contact hospital	307
Contact interpreter agency	119
Help Client understand their illness	22
Prepare for appointment/admission	21
What to expect on the day of their hospital appt	48
Educate the professionals e.g. Deaf Awareness	56
Emergency support	26
Emotional Support	175
Hospital admission support or discharge information	19
Increase information and understanding of process	431
Staff member visit hospital	8
Support with Complaints	49
Talk to family/Carers or Care Givers	23
Understanding Medication	14
Other (not specifically 'health' related)	208

After reflecting on the past year this has been a positive journey and I would like to think that we have made a difference to Deaf people's lives with their health, on the most basic level:

- for them to have BSL interpreters at their appointments
- to allow them to have information and advice about their health
- have an opportunity to make choices and decisions about their health

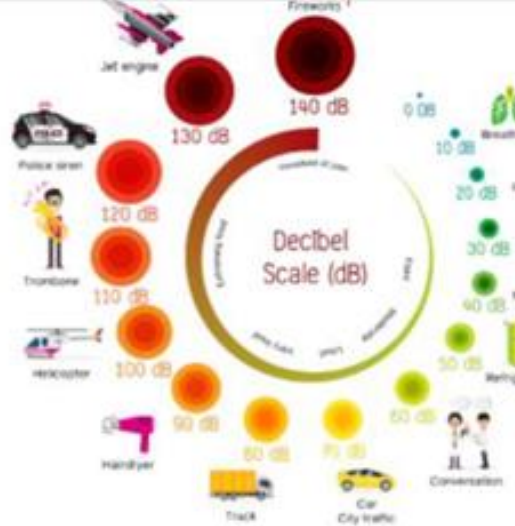
I would like to believe that this is a story of making a difference by improving quality of life, mental health and to maintain their physical health.

Claire Hoggeth

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This would not have happened without our team's effort, determination and our key ingredient to accomplish and face the challenges - support we offer each other within our team.



Working with
BSL Interpreter

D/deaf
Awareness

E-LEARNING MODULES

In this year we created 3 e-learning modules. Mainly in response to the need to deliver training to the healthcare trusts that we are working with. The e-learning modules are delivered by BSL users and a lip-reading specialist. The modules are interactive and have examples and case studies based on real events in the last 12 months.

We are grateful to everyone who gave their time and knowledge in developing this fantastic resource, especially to Jenny Hayes for her creative skills and encouragement and Louise Borrell for content and immense lip-reading knowledge. Many thanks to Julie Storey, Emma Watson, Katie Ho, Judith Pickering, Claire, Jo, Fahmi, Jo Nicolls and EJ for your support, patience and professionalism.

STATISTICS

Clients **230** (and
this involved ...)

Contacts/actions -
2849

Home Visits - **83**

Video Meetings -
483

Deaf Centre drop
in - **61** people
with 142 queries

Staff attended **100**
meetings with
other organisations

FINANCES

INCOME £108,329

SPENT £107,087

Thanks to our funders and contributors - Newcastle Fund, the Peoples Postcode Lottery and various organisations who have bought D/deaf awareness training. We also received funding from the 3 hospital trusts - CNTW, NuTH and NHCT and the Health Foundation and NHS England to help us to deliver the Health Navigator programme.

THANK YOU for the wonderful donations from members of the public. We would especially like to thank Gateshead Deaf Women's Health Group and Yvonne Lord.

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**To everyone who has helped in
2023-24 - we really couldn't do
it without you**

- **Board Members**
- **Volunteers**
- **Staff**
- **Partners**
- **Funders**
- **Communication Support professionals**



Partners include: Northumbria, Newcastle and CNTW Hospital Trusts; Newcastle Deaf Centre; Shearers Bar & Strawberry Place

CONTACT INFORMATION

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